

REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 8-16, 18-27 and 29-31 are pending in the application. Claims 2-6, 8-10, 21-27 and 29-31 are withdrawn from consideration. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 11-16 and 18-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Sharma et al (U.S. Pat. No. 6,364,459). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1 and 11 are independent. Claim 1 calls for a droplet ejecting device comprising: an ejector that is adapted to eject a liquid stored in a pressure chamber from an ejecting nozzle by applying pressure to the pressure chamber; an ejection timing detector that is adapted to **detect a liquid column being ejected** from the ejecting nozzle; a droplet separator that is adapted to give, to the liquid column, an energy that separates the liquid column from the liquid stored in the pressure chamber; and a controller that is adapted to control the droplet separator to give an energy at a timing when a predetermined time period has elapsed since the ejection of the liquid column detected by the ejection timing detector.

Similarly, claim 11 calls for a droplet ejecting method, comprising: ejecting a liquid stored in a pressure chamber from an ejecting nozzle by applying pressure to the pressure chamber; **detecting a liquid column being ejected** from the ejecting nozzle; and giving, to the liquid column, an energy that separates the liquid column from the

liquid stored in the pressure chamber, the energy being given at a timing when a predetermined time period has elapsed since the ejection of the liquid column.

The Office Action alleges that Sharma discloses in Figure 3, which is reproduced below, an ejection timing detector. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

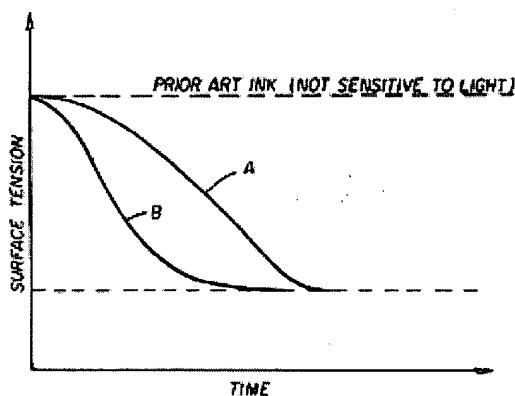


FIG. 3

Figure 3 of Sharma merely discloses a relationship between surface tension and time. As stated in column 4 of Sharma, Figure 3 compares a light sensitive ink with a non-light sensitive ink and provides a method of producing an extended meniscus. While Applicant acknowledges that it may be possible to anticipate the start timing by using the relation depicted in Figure 3, it is **impossible** to detect that a liquid column is actually ejected from a nozzle.

To clarify the above distinction, Applicant amended Claim 1 to recite that the ejection timing detector is adapted to **detect a liquid column being ejected** from the ejecting nozzle. Similarly, Applicant amended Claim 11 to recite the step of **detecting a liquid column being ejected** from the ejecting nozzle. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1 and 11 are patentable over Sharma. Further, inasmuch as Claims 12-16 and 18-20 depend from claim 11, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 12 -16 and 18-20 are patentable over Sharma for at least the same reasons.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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